

# *St. Francis' Primary School Drummaroad*



## *Staff Code of Conduct Teaching and Non-teaching*

*Spring 2021*

<b>Date Ratified</b>	
<b>Signature:</b> <b>Chairperson of the Board of Governors</b>	
<b>Signature:</b> <b>Principal</b>	

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and a help to all school staff. It sets out standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing the School. This code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. **If in doubt, ask.**

The underlying purpose is to ensure that the School provides a high quality service to its pupils and stakeholders in accordance with the Mission Statement and to promote public confidence in the integrity of the School.

It takes in the requirements of the law and attempts to define the required levels of professionalism to ensure the well-being of the School, its staff and its customers.

It has been drafted to comply with School Policies and Procedures.

Staff are requested to read this Code carefully and consider the issues which it raises.

The Principal should also ensure that all staff are aware of the Code's contents and are fully briefed on its implications.

Reference to this Code will be made in all contacts of employment, and copies will be given to all staff. In addition, the induction programme for all new staff will reinforce the principles of this Code.

Investigations of alleged breaches of this Code will be covered under the School's Disciplinary procedures and related codes of practice.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **EXCLUSIVITY OF SERVICE**

Staff's off-duty hours are their personal concern, but they should avoid a position where duty and private interests conflict. This includes:

- Staff members making online associations/friendships with current pupils via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Staff members using texting/email facilities on either their mobile phone or PC/Mac to communicate with current pupils.

The above have been included to safeguard the safety of pupils and the safety and professional integrity of school staff.

The School does not seek to preclude staff unreasonably from undertaking additional employment but you are required to devote your full time, attention and abilities to your duties during your working hours and to act in the best interests of the School at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without the written consent of the EA, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the School.

It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or fractional contract, you are required to notify the EA and Principal of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the School. (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment began with the School).

### **SPECIFIC ASPECTS**

**Discrimination:** Staff must at all times observe the School's Equal Opportunities Policies for staff and pupils and treat pupils, parents and other stakeholders in accordance with those policies.

**Health and Safety:** Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. All staff must comply with the requirements of the School Health and Safety policy and relevant legislation and regulations, and also ensure that pupils do likewise.

**Fire:** Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practice fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure they are perceived by pupils as an essential precaution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

**Business Practice:** Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all their professional relationships.

**Media:** Other than on matters of publicity, only the Principal is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the School to members of the press or broadcast media. This decision is to avoid any embarrassment or unfair pressure on staff. This authorisation may be extended by the Principal to other staff members.

**Copyright:** Staff shall observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.

### **Data Protection Act**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the School's compliance with the Data Protection Act. Personal data must only be used to assist you to carry out your work; it must not be given to people who have no right to see it. All staff should maintain the security of all computerised databases of information on individuals, whether they are staff, pupils or members of the general public. Staff should refer any queries to the Principal.

### **GENERAL POINTS**

Staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour that is required in an educational establishment (see also Appendix 1).

Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager, and enable effective communication throughout the School.

Staff should not use their position in the School for private advantage or gain.

Staff should avoid words and deeds that might bring the School into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others (staff/pupils/parents/community).

Staff should retain professional independent objectivity and not promote dogma or political bias to others in their working activities.

Staff should be aware of, and should follow School policies systems and procedures. They should normally communicate through the line management structure, and should ensure pupils do likewise.

Continuing professional development and support shall be provided by the School and, where appropriate and agreed, will be based on the objectives of the School Development Plan. Periodically, employees will be required to attend certain training activities.

Staff should attend their place of work punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at the times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should, whenever possible, give as much notice to the Principal so that alternative cover arrangements may be made.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES**

Teaching staff shall maintain and properly complete a register for all classes.

In order to ensure safeguards both for staff and pupils, staff must obtain permission from the Principal:

- before taking pupils off the School premises;
- before arranging for any visiting speakers;
- before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the School.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Staff shall maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to student and staff records and other sensitive matters. They should take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters within the School community which could cause distress to School staff, pupils or parents.

### **Code of Conduct Regarding:**

#### **Private Meetings with Pupils:**

- Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or the door open.
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.

- Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.
- In cases where a child needs changed as a result of them wetting or soiling themselves please see Intimate Care Policy.

### Physical Contact with Pupils:

- As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- Staff should not touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*)).
- Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. **However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.** There are 3 members of staff specifically trained in First Aid and where possible incidents where first aid has to be administered should be carried out by one of these three members of staff.
- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the principal.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials:**

- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with sex education programmes.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

### **Intimate Care:**

- If a child has an accident during the school day the Intimate Care Policy will be adhered to.

### **Relationships and Attitudes:**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the Employing Authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with young boys and girls. Teachers are not to place pupils outside their classrooms as a strategy for dealing with a discipline issue.

Take care that your conduct does not give rise to speculation. In other words:

- Be careful what you say
- Be careful what you do

Any suspicions about abuse by a colleague should be brought to the Principal's attention immediately.

### **Residential Trips**

#### **Before trip**

Teachers going on the trip familiarise themselves with joint board regulations for residential trip. A joint board permission form will be sent to the board 6 weeks before the start of the trip

Both parents and pupils will be made aware of the following:

- WHO are the members of staff involved with the trip
- WHAT happens on each day
- WHERE the children are staying

- HOW the pupils will be transported and conducted around the various activities
- WHEN they will leave and arrangements for their collection when trip is over.
- The trip leader is responsible for the establishment of safe procedures in relation to supervision and discipline
- Children will be made aware of expected behaviour; potential dangers; what to do if they get separated from the group
- The trip leader will allocate responsibilities in respect of first aid, administration and storage of medication.

#### During trip

- Children will be aware of who to go to in case of an emergency or if they have a problem.
- Staff will be readily accessible at all times
- Staff should enter rooms in twos or where it is not possible the door MUST be left open.
- If staff are alerted during the night, they should ensure that another adult is present or that other children in the room are awake.
- Staff should avoid being alone with a child however in an emergency common sense should prevail. This also applies to the administration of first aid or medication.
- A contingency plan will be in place in the event of a child needing hospital attention.

#### School Day Trips and Swimming

**Behaviour:** Children are expected to behave in an acceptable way and show good manners at all times. Accompanying parents are asked to reinforce this. Discipline should be verbal only and the teacher in charge informed.

**Numbers:** Staff should avoid being alone with one pupil during the trip. Keep the children together at all times in the interests of safety and your protection.

**Toileting:** Children go to the toilet before leaving school. On the trip take two children to the toilet at a time. Adults should wait outside toilets. Have specific and regular toilet stops.

**Bus:** Staff can sit beside children if necessary. Assist with seatbelts if necessary – all children must wear a seatbelt.

**First Aid:** One person should be pre appointed to administer first aid and should be aware of any allergies etc.

**Supervision:** Count group regularly. Ensure correct adult: pupil ratio is adhered to

**Changing:** Staff should wait outside where possible

**Parents:** Parents who volunteer are all vetted according to regulations

**WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK!**

If any member of staff is in any doubt with regard to the guidelines of this Code, and how they apply in any particular situation, then please consult with the Principal. It is re-emphasised that this Code is intended to be a help and to enable fairness and equity between all staff.



## **APPENDIX 1**

## **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR**

Professional behaviour is a generic term, but within this Code of Conduct includes such aspects as:

- acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- endeavouring to assist the School achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- respect for School property;
- maintaining the image of the School through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of School stationery, etc.;
- taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- being fit for work (i.e. not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- being familiar with job requirements (e.g. proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- being familiar with communication channels and School procedures applicable to both pupils and staff;
- ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- respect for the rights and opinions of others.

This list is not exhaustive but the examples are given as a summary.

## **APPENDIX 2**

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

The following are examples of behaviour which the School finds unacceptable. The list is not exhaustive and it is acknowledged that it will be necessary to exercise judgement in all cases and to be fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

1. Any form of physical/verbal violence towards pupils.
2. Physical violence, actual or threatened towards other staff or visitors to the School.
3. Sexual offences, sexual insults or sexual discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
4. Racial offences, racial insults or racial discrimination against pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
5. Theft of School monies or property and of monies or property of colleagues or visitors to the School. Removal from School premises of property which is not normally taken away without the express authority of the Principal or of the owner of the property may be regarded as gross misconduct.
6. Deliberate falsification of documents such as time sheets, bonus sheets, subsistence and expense claims for the purpose of gain.
7. Acceptance of bribes or other corrupt financial practices.
8. Wilful damage of School property or of property belonging to other staff or visitors to the School.
9. Wilful disregard of safety rules or policies affecting the safety of pupils, other staff or visitors to the School.
10. Any wilful act which could result in actionable negligence for compensation against the School.
11. Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by staff with a supervisory responsibility.
12. Gross neglect of duties and responsibilities.
13. Unauthorised absence from work.
14. Being untruthful and/or engaging in deception in matters of importance within the School community.
15. Deliberate breaches of confidentiality particularly on sensitive matters.
16. Being incapable by reason of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed for a health problem) from fulfilling duties and responsibilities of employment.

17. Conduct which substantially brings the name of the School into disrepute or which seriously undermines confidence in the employee.

**The following are examples of behaviour which could lead to formal disciplinary warnings.**

1. Unsatisfactory timekeeping without permission.
2. Neglect of safety rules and procedures. Some offences of wilful neglect may be regarded as gross misconduct.
3. Breaches of confidentiality. Deliberate breaches on sensitive matters maybe regarded as gross misconduct.
4. Failure to comply with reasonable work related requirements or lack of care in fulfilling the duties of the post.
5. Behaviour towards other employees, pupils, and visitors which gives justifiable offence. Certain behaviour giving rise to offence may be regarded as gross misconduct.
6. Acting in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous or lacking appropriate professional demeanour. In certain circumstances such behaviour may be regarded as gross misconduct.
7. Conduct which it is considered adversely affects either the reputation of the School or affects confidence in the employee. Certain conduct may be regarded as gross misconduct.